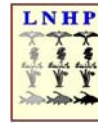


# Natural Communities of Louisiana



## Slash Pine-Pondcypress/Hardwood Forest

**Rarity Rank:** S2S3/G2?

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



**Synonyms:** Wet Slash Pine Flatwoods

**Ecological Systems:** CES203.375 East Gulf Coastal Plain Near-Coast Pine Flatwoods

### General Description:

- Restricted to the wet acidic flatwoods on the far eastern Pleistocene prairie terraces of Louisiana's East Gulf Coastal Plain
- Found in a mosaic with longleaf pine flatwoods and savannahs, and bayhead swamps, existing in a hydrologic/topographic transitional zone between the higher, "drier" longleaf pine flatwood savannahs to the lower, wetter bayhead swamps
- May also be present on broad flats that are partially protected from frequent surface fires by surrounding bayheads or seeps
- Soils are hydric (wet), strongly acidic and nutrient poor silt loams and fine sandy loams
- Two principal soils are Myatt fine sandy loam and Guyton silt loam
- Surface soils are typically saturated for much of the year and shallow water may be present in the late fall/winter/early spring and after rains during the growing season
- Varies considerably in structure and somewhat in composition from one place to another, apparently as a consequence of minor variations in topography, soil conditions, and hydrologic and fire regimes
- Fire dependent natural community; both slash pine and pondcypress are fire-adapted species however, neither is as fire resistant as longleaf pine
- Fire interval is difficult to estimate but is believed to have varied between 5 and 20 years

### Plant Community Associates

#### Common tree species include:

*Pinus elliottii* (slash pine)

*Nyssa biflora* (swamp black gum)

*Taxodium ascendens* (pondcypress)

*Magnolia virginiana* (sweetbay)

#### Common understory species include:

*Cyrilla racemiflora* (swamp cyrilla)

*Lyonia lucida* (fetterbush)

*Itea virginica* (Virginia willow)

*Morella cerifera* (waxmyrtle)

*Arundinaria gigantea* (switch cane)

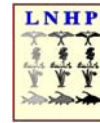
*Ilex coriacea* (sweet gallberry)

*Ilex glabra* (littleleaf gallberry)

*Morella heterophylla* (bigleaf waxmyrtle)

*Smilax* spp. (greenbriers)

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## **Common ground layer species include:**

*Sphagnum* spp. (sphagnum moss)

minimal herbaceous undergrowth

Scattered, depauperate specimens of herbs, more typical of sunny wet pine savannahs (e.g., *Sarracenia alata*, yellow pitcher-plant), may be observed.

*Pteridophytes* (ferns)

## **Federally-listed plant & animal species:**

*Picoides borealis* (red-cockaded woodpecker)

Endangered; G2; S2

## **Range:**

Presettlement extent of this habitat is estimated at 50,000 to 100,000 acres, with only 10 to 25% currently remaining. Restricted to the East Gulf Coastal Plain; primarily associated with pine flatwoods including eastern longleaf pine savannahs and occasional bogs.

## **LA River Basins:**

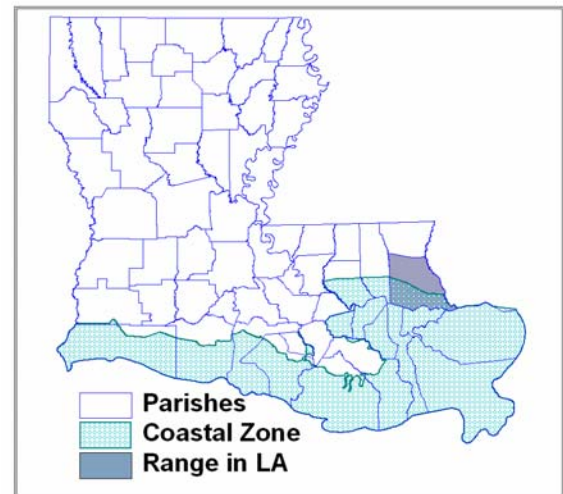
Pontchartrain, Pearl

## **Threats:**

- Construction of roads, pipelines or utilities
- Conversion to slash or loblolly pine plantations
- Residential or commercial development
- Soil damage from timber harvesting and planting activities (eg. bedding)
- Hydrological alterations (to include adjacent areas)
- Contamination by chemicals (herbicides, fertilizers)
- Off-road vehicle use
- Fire exclusion or inappropriate fire regime
- Invasive exotic species

## **Beneficial Management Practices:**

- Prevent conversion of existing natural forests to other land uses
- Use of growing season prescribed fire (April-June) at a frequency of every 5 to 10 years
- No logging during wet periods when the soil is saturated
- No bedding or other soil disturbance that may alter natural water flow patterns
- Prohibit off-road vehicle use, or restrict use to pre-existing trails
- Remove any invasive exotic plant species with use of spot herbicides or mechanical means



Georgia tickseed (*Coreopsis nudata*), rare plant found in slash pine flatwoods and eastern longleaf pine savannahs.